

Odeand ornaments or just chatting.

361 The village layout is a reflection of the Bororo social structure. The Bororo point around the village circle with their fingers to show the place of important social groups. It is not necessary that these social groups actually be present in a village; the ideal village plan is in Bororo minds.

The villages are always situated near rivers. In the part of Mato Grosso where the Bororo live, rivers flow from east to west, and the villages are oriented so that the east-west axis divides them into two halves. The Echerae moiety occupies the southern half, the Tugarege moiety occupies the northern. Each moiety consists of four clans, each clan of two subclans, and each subclan of many lineages. A lineage consists of people who are matrilineal descendants of an ancestor and carry the same family name, which is the ancestor's personal name. A clan is an aggregate of lineages said by the Bororo to be related as matrilineal descendants of

[55] brothers. By the act of naming, each brother transmitted his status and prerogatives to a different nephew (sister's son) and thus established a new lineage. Clans and subclans are characterized by their ornaments, songs, tools, animals, and plants. Though the moiety is not supposed to originate from a common ancestor, the relationships among lineages within the moiety are treated as if their common ancestors had been brothers. In a village it is desirable for the important lineages to be represented so that the village can properly carry out

- 621 its ceremonial obligations. It is felt that each clan should
 • 61 have its own house, but if the number of people in the clan
 is too large, additional houses can be built.

582 Preferential marriage between particular lineages is
 616 supported by myths. Marriages are all contracted between the
 [538] two moieties except for two cases within the Echeræ moiety.
 Otherwise marriages within the same moiety are frowned on.
 Marriage does not establish an alliance between two groups.
 Rather, marriage is the result of an alliance which was es-
 tablished by other means in the mythical past.

796 All important events in a person's life, such as naming,
 533 initiation, and death, are marked by songs and ceremonies.
 [764] The ceremonies on the occasion of death are particularly long
 [424] and elaborate. Traditional songs, each of which belongs to
 [195] a particular clan, are in a poetic language not understood by
 many contemporary Bororo.

178 Today the old ways of life are disappearing. Hunting
 [222] and gathering have become fruitless in a changed and impover-
 [224] ished environment and have been almost completely given up.
 [796] Many ceremonies are not held anymore. For lack of material,
 [534] ornaments are not made according to the old standards. The
 [136] colorful birds, the jaguars, and the other animals of the
 [181] forest are gone. Yet the Bororo remain a proud people. They
 [175] are proud of their heritage and often point out that all over
 western Mato Grosso potsherds and annatto plants planted by
 their ancestors attest the extent of their territory and the
 number of villages that existed in the past. They compare

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- A. Equality of like items, or the relationships of equivalence,¹
 - B. Inequality of like items, or the relationships of proper inequality,
 - C. Equality of unlike items, or the relationships of symmetrical reciprocity.

I did not find the fourth possibility expressed in the Bororo social structure: inequality of unlike items; though the work of other researchers indicates that certain forms of hierarchical relationships may exist even between moieties (see page 186).

• [61] All three kinds of relationships are expressed most clearly through the idiom of kinship, and all three are necessary to understand the Bororo social and cosmological universe. In previous chapters we have already had the opportunity to see some of these relationships at work. In this chapter I will present the case in greater detail.

A. Relationships of Equivalence

593 The first kind of relationship originates in that between a woman and her child, and by successive extensions includes the relationships between sister and brother (= child), sis-

¹ Equality should be distinguished from equivalence. I consider two items to be equal if they have the same value in respect to some attribute (here it is social status). Equivalent items, in addition to having the same value in regard to the relevant attribute, are also like each other and substitutable for each other.